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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/628,411	07/29/2003	John F. Gullo	08049.0924-00	6329

22852 7590 07/07/2010

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP
901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413

EXAMINER	
JUNG, ALLEN J	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3628	

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
07/07/2010	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/628,411	GULLO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	ALLEN J. JUNG	3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *24 March 2010*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,5-8,11-21,23-25,27,28,30,31 and 33-59* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) *7,8,18,19,28,30,31 and 33-44* is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,5,6,11-17,20,21,23-25,27 and 45-59* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *March 24, 2010*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. This action is in reply to the response filed on March 24, 2010.

2. Claims 1, 11, 20, and 24 have been amended.

3. Claims 48-59 have been added.

4. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11-17, 20, 21, 23-25, 27, and 45-59 are currently under examination.

Information Disclosure Statement

5. The Information Disclosure Statement filed on March 24, 2010 has been considered. An initialed copy of the Form 1449 is enclosed herewith.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

6. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on March 24, 2010 has been entered.

Previous Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

7. Claim 1 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The rejection is now withdrawn.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11-17, 20, 21, 23-25, 27, and 45-47 have been fully considered but are not persuasive.

9. The Applicant had presented the following arguments:

- *Without conceding to the final Office Action's allegations, Applicants submit that neither Bennett's human-readable characters 28, nor its human readable delivery confirmation code, nor the unique identifier of a mail piece included in the human-readable characters 28, is "associated with billing information of a sender," as recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, Bennett does not teach or suggest "wherein at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number is associated with billing information of a sender," as recited in amended claim 1, and thus, fails to cure the deficiencies of Whitehouse and Sansone.*

The Examiner respectfully disagrees. Bennett, in at least Figs 8-9 and col3:line61-col4:line32, discloses that payment indicia 81 is embedded in the characters 28. With regard to the characters 28, as clearly noted in the grounds of rejection, the "unique identifier" is embedded in character 28, as well. Hence, there is a clear association between the "postage value" (teaching billing information of a sender) and "unique identifier" (teaching unique postage number). Also see 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection given below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

12. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 11-17, 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 45-51 and 54-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitehouse (US 6,005,945), in view of Sansone et al (US 5,019,991), in view of Bennett (US 7,458,612 B1).

Claims 1 and 11:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitations:

a) *Estimating, using a computer accessing a website associated with a mail delivery system, a postage amount necessary to send a piece of mail;* (See at least Fig 5A: items 200 and 206, col13:lines5-10, Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

b) *Prepaying, through the computer accessing the website, for the estimated postage amount;* (See at least col13:lines5-10, col13:lines51-55, col14:lines37-46, Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

c) *Printing, using a printing device, a postage indicia that represents the estimated postage amount, an addressee information, a sender information, and a date, wherein the postage indicia represents the estimated postage amount in a format readable by machine only.* (See at least Fig 5B:item220 and col13:lines22-38, col13:lines55-60, Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

d) *affixing to a mailpiece the postage indicia;* (See at least Fig 6:items 105 & 107)

e) *delivering the mailpiece through the mail delivery system;* (See at least Fig 8: item312)

With regard to the limitation a, Whitehouse teaches that a postage amount is estimated, because in at least Fig 5A: item 200, it is depicted that the postage calculation is based on a user-input

weight. It is also noted that in at least Fig 8 and col22:lines14-20, Whitehouse discloses that such postage amount is validated using "mail piece's weight as determined by the postage scanning station 253." Therefore, Whitehouse's initial generation of postage amount is an estimated value (steps in Fig 5A) that uses user-input parameters.

With regard to the limitation b, Whitehouse teaches, in at least the lines cited, that the user pays the calculated postage amount via user account.

With regard to the limitation c, Whitehouse discloses, in at least col13:lines22-38, that items such as "date of mailing," "postage," "origin:ZIP+4+2," and "destination:ZIP+4+2" are included in "the data included in each postage indicium generated by the central secure computer. Whitehouse also discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..." Here, this "two dimensional barcode" teaches the limitation "*postage indicia including the estimated postage amount in a format readable by machine only,*" because Whitehouse's indicia is certainly including this two-dimensional barcode, and this two-dimensional barcode is a format readable by machine only.

Whitehouse does not specifically disclose the following limitation. However, Sansone, as shown, does:

- *paying an adjusted postage amount, subsequent to the mailing of the mailpiece, in response to a bill.* (See at least col2:lines25-37)

Sansone, in at least the lines cited, discloses that "where short paid mail occurs, as for example, where weighted mail is being marked with an indicia for a presort discount and/or a bundling discount and it is determined that this discount is not properly available, in conjunction with the evidence of postage payment already coded or read into the system, the system may debit an advance deposit account for adjusting electronically for the short paid mail. The advantage to the user is that no mail is returned for short payment."

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine Whitehouse's postage calculation/mailing procedure, with adjusted postage payment scheme

taught by Sansone. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Whitehouse/Sansone combination does not specifically disclose the following limitations. However, Bennett, as shown, does:

- *printing, using a printing device, a postage indicia that represents a unique postage number that uniquely identifies the postage indicia and prevents duplication of the postage indicia, a unique delivery confirmation number that uniquely identifies the mailpiece,* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col4:lines 14-32)
- *wherein at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number is associated with billing information of a sender.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

Bennett, in at least Fig 2, depicts a postage indicium that has various elements. Among the elements are "human-readable characters 28," as well as human readable delivery confirmation code (item 32). With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable characters 28, Figs 8-9 and their corresponding texts in col4:lines14-32 expand further on the components of the character string. It is disclosed that unique identifier of the mail piece could be included in the string 28. With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable delivery confirmation number, Bennett does not explicitly state that the delivery confirmation is a number that "uniquely identifies the mailpiece." However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the delivery confirmation number is unique to the mail piece, because if it is not unique, then there would be risk of duplication of delivery confirmation procedures of multiple mail pieces.

With regard to the second limitation listed above, Bennett, in at least Figs 8-9 and col3:line61-col4:line32, discloses that payment indicia 81 is embedded in the characters 28. With regard to the characters 28, the "unique identifier" is embedded in character 28, as well. Hence, there is a

clear association (through formation of a single character 28) between the "postage value" (teaching billing information of a sender) and "unique identifier" (teaching unique postage number).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation and indicia printing scheme, with Bennett's addition of certain mailing parameters into printed postage indicia. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 11, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 1. Accordingly, claim 11 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 1, as described above.

Claims 2 and 12:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *prepaying the estimated postage amount comprises prepaying the estimated postage via the Internet.* (See at least col7:lines64-47, and col14:lines37-46)

Whitehouse, in at least col7:lines64-47, discloses that the user's computer is connected via "a communication interface 112 such as a modem, LAN connection, or Internet connection, for handling communications with one of the secure central computers 102" Whitehouse further discloses, in at least col14:lines37-46, that "the present invention completely abandons the concept of a locally maintained postage balance. Instead the official balance for any given user is maintained at the centralized secure computer. The balance may be increased at any time by the user through any number of secure means (e.g., a check taken to a local post office, funds mailed, or credit card transactions via the Web). All of these postage increase transactions are handled by the central secure site where standard payment verification techniques can be applied

before the balance is actually updated." Here, Whitehouse clearly teaches that replenishable account exists at a central computer, which user could manage and replenish over the Internet.

As per claim 12, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 2. Accordingly, claim 12 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 2, as described above.

Claims 5 & 45:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *(claim 5) the format readable by machine only comprises a bar code format* (See at least col13:lines55-60)
- *(claim 45) wherein the bar code format is a 2 dimensional bar code format* (See at least col13:lines55-60)

Whitehouse discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..."

Claims 6 & 17:

Whitehouse/Sansone discloses the limitations of claim 1, which claim 6 depends upon. Whitehouse/Sansone does not specifically disclose the following limitation. However, Bennett, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *The unique postage number is used to verify that the postage indicia has not previously been used on a second mailpiece*. (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col4:lines 14-32)

Bennett, in at least Fig 2, depicts a postage indicium that has various elements. Among the elements are "human-readable characters 28," as well as human readable delivery confirmation code (item 32). With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable characters 28, Figs 8-9 and their corresponding texts in col4:lines14-32 expand further on the components of the character string. It is disclosed that unique identifier of the mail piece could be included in the string 28.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation and indicia printing scheme, with Bennett's

addition of certain mailing parameters into printed postage indicia. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 17, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 6. Accordingly, claim 17 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 6, as described above.

Claim 13:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *A printer for printing the postage indicia.* (See at least col13:lines55-60)

Claim 14:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *A processor for encoding the stealth postage by printing a postage amount, an addressee information, a sender information, and a date.* (See at least col13:lines22-38)

Whitehouse discloses, in at least col13:lines22-38, that items such as "date of mailing," "postage," "origin:ZIP+4+2," and "destination:ZIP+4+2" are included in "the data included in each postage indicium generated by the central secure computer.

Claims 15 & 16:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- (Claim 15) *format readable by machine only is a bar code format* (See at least col13:lines55-60)
- (Claim 16) *wherein the bar code format is a two-dimensional bar code format* (See at least col13:lines55-60)

Whitehouse discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..."

Claims 20 and 24:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitations:

a) *Estimating, using a computer accessing a website, an estimated postage amount necessary for a mailpiece;* (See at least Fig 5A: items 200 and 206, col13:lines5-10 Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

b) *Transmitting, using the computer through a network, payment information for the estimated postage amount;* (See at least col13:lines5-10, col13:lines51-55, col14:lines37-46, Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

c) *Printing, using a printing device, a postage label including the estimated postage amount represented only in an electronically readable format* (See at least col13:lines55-60, Fig 4, and col7:line54-col8:line3)

With regard to the limitation a, Whitehouse teaches that a postage amount is estimated, because in at least Fig 5A: item 200, it is depicted that the postage calculation is based on a user-input weight. It is also noted that in at least Fig 8 and col22:lines14-20, Whitehouse discloses that such postage amount is validated using "mail piece's weight as determined by the postage scanning station 253." Therefore, Whitehouse's initial generation of postage amount is an estimated value (steps in Fig 5A) that uses user-input parameters.

With regard to the limitation b, Whitehouse teaches, in at least the lines cited, that the user pays the calculated postage amount via user account.

With regard to the limitation c, Whitehouse discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..." Here, this "two dimensional barcode" teaches the limitation "*postage label including a postage amount represented only in an electronically readable format,*" because Whitehouse's indicia is certainly including this two-dimensional barcode, and this two-dimensional barcode is a format readable by machine only.

Whitehouse does not specifically disclose the following limitation. However, Sansone, as shown, does:

- *Printing, using a printing device, a postage label including a verification information used by a mailing system to subsequently adjust the estimated postage amount, and wherein the verification information associates a sender's billing information with the mailpiece.* (See at least col5:lines4-10, and col4:lines29-34)

Sansone, in at least col5:lines4-10, discloses that "the descending registers are appropriately debited to reflect the correct postage." Here, the "descending register" is referring to "sender's descending register balances" (col4:lines29-34). Therefore, some time before the actual financial adjustment is made, information with regard to sender's descending register balance (e.g. how to locate it) is received by the system. Sansone does not explicitly specify *when* that information is received. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that this receiving step occurs through the mail piece's barcode while it is reading barcode from the mailpiece (step represented by Fig 2: items 1000 and 1002). One would have been motivated to find it obvious, because Sansone clearly states in at least col4:lines51-59 that these data are input as a "step of providing appropriate transactional mail run data," and one skilled in the art would recognize that the sender's descending register is clearly an appropriate transactional mail run data.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine Whitehouse's postage calculation/mailing procedure, with adjusted postage payment scheme taught by Sansone. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Whitehouse/Sansone combination does not specifically disclose the following limitations. However, Bennett, as shown, does:

- *Verification information including a unique postage number that uniquely identifies the postage label and a unique delivery confirmation number that uniquely identifies the mailpiece* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col4:lines 14-32)
- *Wherein at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number of the verification information is associated with a sender's billing information.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

Bennett, in at least Fig 2, depicts a postage indicium that has various elements. Among the elements are "human-readable characters 28," as well as human readable delivery confirmation code (item 32). With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable characters 28, Figs 8-9 and their corresponding texts in col4:lines14-32 expand further on the components of the character string. It is disclosed that unique identifier of the mail piece could be included in the string 28. With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable delivery confirmation number, Bennett does not explicitly state that the delivery confirmation is a number that "uniquely identifies the mailpiece." However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that the delivery confirmation number is unique to the mail piece, because if it is not unique, then there would be risk of duplication of delivery confirmation procedures of multiple mail pieces.

With regard to the second limitation listed above, Bennett, in at least Figs 8-9 and col3:line61-col4:line32, discloses that payment indicia 81 is embedded in the characters 28. With regard to the characters 28, the "unique identifier" is embedded in character 28, as well. Hence, there is a clear association (through formation of a single character 28) between the "postage value" (teaching billing information of a sender) and "unique identifier" (teaching unique postage number).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation/indicia printing/payment adjustment scheme, with Bennett's addition of certain mailing parameters into the verification portion of printed postage indicia. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately.

One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 24, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 20. Accordingly, claim 24 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 20, as described above.

Claims 21 and 25:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *creating the postage label by producing a bar code containing the estimated postage amount, wherein the postage label further includes a date, an addressee information, and a sender information* (See at least Fig 5B:item220 and col13:lines22-38, col13:lines55-60)

Whitehouse discloses, in at least col13:lines22-38, that items such as "date of mailing," "postage," "origin:ZIP+4+2," and "destination:ZIP+4+2" are included in "the data included in each postage indicium generated by the central secure computer. Whitehouse also discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..."

As per claim 25, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 21. Accordingly, claim 25 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 21, as described above.

Claims 23 and 27:

Whitehouse, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *wherein the bar code is a two dimensional bar code* (See at least col13:lines55-60)

Whitehouse discloses, in at least the lines cited, that the user "prints the mail piece label with the indicium and digital signature in the message as a two dimensional barcode..."

As per claim 27, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 23. Accordingly, claim 27 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 23, as described above.

Claims 46 and 47:

Whitehouse/Sansone/Bennett discloses the limitations of claim 1, which claim 46 depends upon. Bennett, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *the postage indicia further includes a human-readable printed notation indicating online payment of the estimated postage amount.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col4: lines 14-32, and the Abstract)

Bennett, in at least Fig 2, depicts a postage indicium that has various elements. Among the elements are "human-readable characters 28." With specific regard to Bennett's human-readable characters 28, Figs 8-9 and their corresponding texts in col4:lines14-32 expand further on the components of the character string. It is disclosed that customer authorization number of the mail piece could be included in the string 28. This customer authorization number, which is included in the human readable string, is functionally equivalent to "human-readable printed notation indicating online payment of the estimated postage amount," because the "customer" in the context of Bennett's system is clearly an Internet postage transaction customer (as is replete throughout Bennett's disclosure), and this authorization number associated with the online customer is clearly "indicating online payment of" the postage amount.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation/indicia printing/payment adjustment scheme, with Bennett's addition of certain mailing parameters into a human-readable portion of printed postage indicia. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 47, this claim encompasses substantially the same scope as claim 46. Accordingly, claim 47 is rejected in substantially the same manner as claim 46, as described above.

Claims 48-51 and 54-59:

Whitehouse/Sansone/Bennett discloses the limitations of claim 1, which claims 48-50 depend upon. Bennett, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *the postage indicia represents at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number in a human readable format.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

- *the postage indicia represents at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number in a machine readable format.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

- *the postage indicia represents at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number in both a human readable format and a machine readable format.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

With regard to the first limitation listed above, Bennett discloses that character string 28, which comprises unique identifier, is in a human-readable format.

With regard to the second and the third limitations listed above, Bennett does not explicitly state that the human-readable string 28 is also machine readable. However, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention would find obvious that a human-readable string, such as string 28, could be read and recognized by a machine. One would find it obvious because at least Whitehouse, the primary reference in the instant ground of rejection, clearly discloses in at least col25:lines59-65, that "OCR read" could read a string information on mailpieces and be transmitted as a computerized data.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation/indicia printing/payment adjustment scheme, with Bennett's human readable and machine readable representations. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have

performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claims 51 and 54-59, these claims encompass substantially the same scope as claims 48-51. Accordingly, claims 51 and 54-59 are rejected in substantially the same manner as claims 48-51, as described above.

13. Claims 52-53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitehouse (US 6,005,945), in view of Sansone et al (US 5,019,991), in view of Bennett (US 7,458,612 B1), and further in view of **Official Notice.**

Claims 52-53:

Whitehouse/Sansone/Bennett discloses the limitations of claim 11, which claims 52-53 depend upon. Bennett, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number is in the format readable by machine only.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

- *at least one of the unique postage number and the unique delivery confirmation number is in both a human readable format and the format readable by machine only.* (See at least Fig 2, Figs 8-9, col3:line61-col4:line32)

With regard to the first limitation listed above, Bennett discloses that character string 28, which comprises unique identifier, is in a human-readable format. Bennett does not explicitly disclose that such human-readable string could be represented in a format readable by machine only. However, the Examiner takes Official Notice that it is old and well known in the computer data representation arts to convert human readable strings into formats readable by machine only such as barcodes. Regenerating a human readable character string into barcode format is customary means for enhancing convenience and security.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine White/Sansone combination's postage calculation/indicia printing/payment adjustment scheme, with Bennett's human readable and machine readable representations. The claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to **Allen J. Jung** whose telephone number is **571.270.3919.** The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:00pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, **JOHN W. HAYES** can be reached at **571.272.6708**.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://portal.uspto.gov/external/portal/pair <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov >. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at **866.217.9197** (toll-free).

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July 3, 2010

/Allen J Jung/ Examiner, Art Unit 3628

/IGOR BORISSOV/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628